



State-by-State Information about How to Find Family Members Who Have Been Separated by Adoption

Mutual Consent Registry: This is how all parties involved in adoption provide information on whether they are willing or unwilling to have identifying information disclosed. These registries vary from state to state but generally the consent is needed from one birth parent and either the adoptive child or adoptive parents depending on the age of the child to release this information. In most states, the parties need to file an affidavit in order to release the information.

Non identifying Information: This is information about birth parents and children that does not give away the identity of the individuals. This information could include this different information: when and where the adoptive child was born, how old the birth parents are and a brief physical description, race, ethnicity, medical information and religion of the birth parents, how much schooling the birth parents have, why the child was put up for adoption and any other children each birth parent may have. All states have provisions in place about who can obtain this information and when. Usually it is given to adoptive parents at the time of adoption. Adoptive children can request to receive this information generally once they turn 18 years of age.

Identifying Information: Information that reveals a person's identity, such as last name, address, phone number and detailed family history. In the field of adoption search and reunion, information allowing a birth parent, adoptive parent or an adoptee to be identified and located.

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Nonidentifying information may be released, upon request, to:

- The adult adopted person
- The birth parents
- Adult birth siblings
- The child of the adopted person, if the adopted person is deceased
- The adoptive parents
- The adoptive parents may access only nonidentifying information

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- When certain information would assist in the provision of medical care, a medical emergency, a medical diagnosis, or a treatment, a party to the adoption, a child, legal guardian, health-care agent may request that the department or child-placing agency access its own records on finalized adoptions. For the purpose of adding subsequently obtained medical information or releasing nonidentifying medical and health history information contained in its records pertaining to an adopted person, the biological parents, or relatives of the biological parents of the adopted person.
- When the State Adoption Unit of the Division of Family and Children Services or a child-placing agency receives documented medical information relevant to an adopted person, the office or child-placing agency shall use reasonable efforts to contact the adoptive parents of the adopted person if the adopted person is younger than age 18, or the adopted person if he or she is age 18 or older, and provide the documented medical information to the adoptive parents or the adopted person.
- Upon the written request of an adopted person age 18 or older or an adoptive parent on behalf of an adopted person, nonidentifying information shall be released regarding the birth parents and the adopted person's birth, including the date and place of the adopted person's birth and the genetic, social, and health history of the birth parents.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- Upon written request of an adopted person age 21 or older, the name of the birth parents shall be released if the birth parent has submitted an unrevoked written consent.
 - If a birth parent has not filed an unrevoked written consent, the department shall, within 6 months of receipt of the written request, make a diligent

effort to notify each birth parent, by personal and confidential contact, that a request for information has been made. The birth parent may then file an affidavit consenting or objecting to disclosure.

- The adopted person also may petition the court to seek the release of information.
 - The court shall grant the petition if it finds that failure to release the identity of each parent would have an adverse impact upon the physical, mental, or emotional health of the adopted person.
- Birth parents and adult birth siblings also may access information about an adopted person using the same procedure.
 - If the adopted person is deceased and leaves a child, such child, upon reaching age 21, may seek the name and other identifying information concerning his or her grandparents in the same manner as the deceased adopted person and subject to the same procedures.
- The Office of Adoptions within the department shall maintain a registry for the recording of requests by adopted persons for the name of any birth parent, the written consent of the written objections of any birth parent to the release of that parent's identity to an adopted person, and for nonidentifying information regarding any birth parent.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate is accessible only by order of the court or as provided by statute.

Georgia Adoption Reunion Registry, Georgia Department of Human Services

Contact Info Last Updated: 20-April-2011

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